

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding Act.

Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds all of the following:

(1) Historical and continued systemic racism has created significant disparities in college access, affordability, and completion for Black, Latinx, and other underrepresented and historically underserved students in this State.

(2) Improvements in postsecondary access, completion, and success rates are required in order to meet State goals for equity in attainment and will require further investments in the higher education system to support historically underrepresented and underserved groups, including Black, Latinx, and low-income students in particular.

(3) This State's approach to funding education has contributed to racial and socioeconomic inequities in access to resources and educational outcomes.

(4) Great strides have been made in this State in

addressing inequity in funding the kindergarten through grade 12 public school system, including the adoption of an evidence-based funding formula, which has resulted in new funds being targeted to the highest-need districts.

(5) Adequate, equitable, and stable investment in higher education is the key to ensuring that every institution of higher education can provide adequate academic, financial, and social-emotional support and services that improve persistence and completion.

(6) In this State, higher education appropriations have effectively been cut in half since fiscal year 2002. Institutions of higher education serving higher percentages of Black students are more reliant on State funds and have been disproportionately harmed by this disinvestment in higher education.

(7) As a result of historic underfunding and level cuts to institutions of higher education, this State's public universities have needed to increase tuition to make up the funding shortfalls.

(8) Combined with the high cost of college and insufficient State financial aid, racial income and wealth disparities caused by structural racism contribute to the accumulation of student debt and make college enrollment and persistence more challenging for Black and Latinx students.

(9) Despite similar numbers of Black high school

graduates, about 25,000 fewer Black students enrolled in institutions of higher education in this State in 2018 compared to 2008.

(10) State appropriations make it possible for colleges to provide essential academic services, social-emotional support and services, and institutional aid to students to improve student persistence and completion.

(11) This State must strategically invest in higher education to address wide disparities in degree completion. Public community colleges currently graduate Black and Latinx students at a rate of 14% and 26% within 3 years, respectively, compared to 38% of white students. At public universities, Black and Latinx students currently graduate at a rate of 34% and 49%, respectively, compared to 66% of white students, within 6 years.

(12) This State has a moral obligation and economic interest in dismantling and reforming structures that create or exacerbate racial and socioeconomic inequities in higher education.

(13) This State benefits from a public higher education system that receives adequate and stable resources for student success and that strategically uses those resources to maximize the potential of each public institution of higher education and to maximize the benefits to this State, including, but not limited to,

improved college access and attainment and higher median wages for all residents, reduced income inequalities, improved economic output and innovation, increased access and engagement in world-class research opportunities, and improved college enrollment, persistence, and completion of underrepresented and historically underserved students, including Black and Latinx students and students from low-income families.

Section 10. Commission on Equitable Public University Funding; purpose.

(a) There is created the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding.

(b) The purpose of the Commission is to, at a minimum, recommend specific data-driven criteria and approaches to the General Assembly to adequately, equitably, and stably fund public universities in this State and to evaluate the existing funding methods used for public universities.

Section 15. Membership; administrative support; compensation.

(a) The membership of the Commission shall include, at a minimum:

(1) One member of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, who shall serve as co-chairperson.

(2) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall serve as co-chairperson.

(3) The chairperson of the Board of Higher Education or a designee, who shall serve as co-chairperson.

(4) One member appointed by the Governor, who shall serve as co-chairperson.

(5) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

(6) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

(7) The chairperson of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission or a designee.

(8) The chairperson of the Higher Education Committee of the House of Representatives or a designee.

(9) The Minority Spokesperson of the Higher Education Committee of the House of Representatives or a designee.

(10) The chairperson of the Higher Education Committee of the Senate or a designee.

(11) The Minority Spokesperson of the Higher Education Committee of the Senate or a designee.

(12) Twelve members representing the public universities in this State each appointed by the President of each public university.

(13) One member representing a higher education

advocacy organization focused on eliminating disparities in college completion in this State for low-income and first-generation college students and students of color appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(14) One member representing a statewide advocacy organization focused on improving educational and employment opportunities for women and adults appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(15) One member representing a statewide advocacy organization focused on developing an equitable birth-to-career educational system appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(16) One member representing a statewide organization that advocates for alternative education and bridge programs and the re-enrollment of students in this State appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(17) One member representing a fiscal policy research organization focused on the impact that State-level budget and tax policies have on equitable education funding solutions appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(18) Two members representing an organization that advocates on behalf of public university faculty members who are each employed by a different university appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(19) One health care expert from the public higher education arena appointed by the Board of Higher

Education, in consultation with the presidents and chancellors of the public universities.

(20) One member who has legal expertise in higher education funding and finance appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(21) One postsecondary student enrolled at a public university in this State appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

(b) The Board of Higher Education shall recognize and consider the representation of underrepresented and historically underserved groups, including those who are Black, Latinx, or from low-income families, and the racial and geographical diversity of this State when making appointments to the Commission.

(c) The co-chairpersons may identify and invite experts to speak to the Commission on issues, including, but not limited to, higher education funding, finance, health care, and research and development.

(d) The Board of Higher Education shall provide administrative support to the Commission, including any related workgroups, and shall be responsible for administering the Commission's operations and ensuring that the requirements of this Act are met.

(e) The members of the Commission shall serve without compensation for their services as members of the Commission.

Section 20. Meetings; reports.

(a) The Commission shall meet at least once per quarter beginning no later than October 15, 2021.

(b) On or before July 1, 2023, the Commission shall deliver to the General Assembly and publish on the Board of Higher Education's Internet website or otherwise make publicly available a report on the Commission's recommendations, including specific criteria and funding approaches in accordance with all applicable laws, to establish an equity-based funding model for the allocation of State funds to public universities. The recommendations included in the report must be equity-centered and consider all of the following areas:

(1) Remediating inequities in funding that have led to disparities in access, affordability, and completion for underrepresented and historically underserved student groups, including students who are Black, Latinx, or from low-income families.

(2) Ensuring that this State adequately, equitably, and stably funds public institutions of higher education in a manner that recognizes historical and current inequities impacting underrepresented minorities' higher education access and completion.

(3) Providing incentives to all 4-year institutions of higher education in this State to enroll underrepresented and historically underserved student groups, including

students who are Black, Latinx, or from low-income families, in proportion to the diversity of this State's population.

(4) Allowing ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement of the public university funding models by requiring transparency and accountability in how State appropriations are expended and identifying a mechanism to study and review the implementation of any funding model developed and the long-term implications of this Act.

(5) Creating guidelines for how funding is distributed during times of significant economic hardship, as defined by the Commission, so that public institutions of higher education are able to adequately, equitably, and stably serve students.

(6) Ensuring that this State adequately and stably funds public institutions of higher education that serve underrepresented and historically underserved student groups, including students who are Black, Latinx, or from low-income families, and graduate and professional students, including doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and veterinarians.

(7) Supporting the diverse individual mission of each public university, including its commitment to research and health care enterprises that serve and enhance the well-being of the residents of this State.

(8) Fostering the economic activity and innovation

generated by a university's activities, while recognizing the impact historic funding inequities may have had on the university's activities.

(9) Taking into consideration the percentage of institutional aid provided from an institution's annual budget.

(10) Taking into consideration the number of undergraduate students engaged in research at each university.

(11) Supporting institutional efforts to recruit and retain world-class faculty and university leaders.

(12) Ensuring stable and adequate funding for all institutions and that all universities are held harmless to their current funding level. The Commission may consider and report approaches to and the impact of a hold harmless funding provision for institutions of higher education as part of its final recommendations.

(13) Taking into consideration the long-term implications and outcomes of the funding systems.

The recommendations must fulfill the principles established by the Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan. The recommendations may also be informed by the data-driven findings and recommendations established by the Chicago State University Equity Working Group and other groups researching equity in higher education and higher education funding and be aligned to this State's postsecondary attainment goal and

related equity targets.

Section 25. Compliance. Notwithstanding any other law or provision to the contrary, all public institutions of higher education and State agencies regulating public institutions of higher education shall furnish such data and information to the Commission as the Commission deems necessary to fulfill the requirements of this Act.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.